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ABSTRACT

This manual reflects the experiences of participants in the Partnership for Family Reading a collaborative project between Montclair State College (New Jersey) and a group of Newark, New Jersey public schools, and is designed to serve as a guide to those who wish to start Family Reading Projects. In 1988, the Partnership for Family Reading began to operate as a school-based and college-supported program of services for adult family members and their young children. With the goal of involving parents and other adult family members in the reading process, Partnership schools instituted informal workshops or demonstration sessions in which adult caregivers became familiar with quality children's books and learned ways of reading and discussing them with their children. The instructional focus was on reading comprehension, and all reading strategies were presented in the context of reading enjoyable children's fiction and non-fiction. Over the course of the project, 26 classrooms in 7 Newark schools held workshops, the majority of them for kindergarten and first grade students. In all, 80 programs were presented. Other aspects of the project were joint activities for parents and children and staff development in the schools. Specific guidelines are given for the establishment and evaluation of Partnership programs. Although the original program officially ended in December 1990, Family Reading Activities continue in most of the schools. Seven appendices provide tips for success in in-school work with families, a logistics and management checklist, the Home Reading Survey, staff and parent evaluation forms, selected resources for family programs and children's literature, and outlines of family reading material and workshops. (SLD)

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THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING

A COLLABORATION OF MONTCLAIR STATE
and NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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and NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

GUIDE TO REPLICATION

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INTRODUCTION

This manual reflects the experiences of teachers, administrators, parents, children and college faculty who participated in the Partnership for Family Reading. It is designed to serve as a guide to replication for schools wishing to institute Family Reading projects. While it is not possible to compress the rich and varied experiences of two and a half years into a brief manual, this publication will distill the most useful recommendations of the Partnership, convey the rationale and some of the color of experiences in the seven participating schools, and provide orientation to issues of parent involvement in education.

As with any project, the Partnership for Family Reading did not spring into existence full-blown. The following chronology summarizes its history and acknowledges colleagues who supported and encouraged the Partnership's emergence and growth.

In 1986, Montclair State entered into a collaborative relationship with a group of Newark, New Jersey public schools for the purpose of working toward the improvement of teaching and learning. The collaboration, called the Barringer Cluster project, was and is a multifacted one. Mindful of the importance of parents to school achievement and of the difficulties of family participation in urban schools, I wished to bring to the project elements of a family reading program that I had developed elsewhere. This suggestion was enthusiastically endorsed by the college coordinator, Dr. Mary Bredemeier, now Montclair State professor emerita, and by Ms. Mary Bennett, then serving as director of the cluster program for the Newark Board of Education. They provided resources and encouragement as a family reading effort started first in one elementary school in spring 1987, then gradually involved six others in 1987-8. When the Metropolitan Life Foundation invited Newark to submit a funding proposal in an area of school/college partnership, family reading was selected as the project of choice. Funding was awarded in summer 1988 and the project, its activities greatly expanded, became officially known as the Partnership for Family Reading.

The support of Dean Nicholas M. Michelli of the School of Professional Studies at Montclair State has been invaluable throughout the two and a half year operation of the Partnership for Family Reading and in its early stages as well. I very much appreciate his continuing interest and advice. Through his facilitation, Montclair State has funded Family Reading Festivals and other special services of the Partnership. I would like to thank my colleagues in the Department of Reading and Educational Media for their interest and help. I would also like to thank my assistant, Ms. Jean LaVista, for her patient work.

The Partnership operated with the active collaboration of the Newark, New Jersey Board of Education. Special thanks to Ms. Rosa Ramos and Ms. Barbara Ervin of the Office of Special Projects for their many contributions to Partnership activities.

Seven Newark elementary schools participated in the Partnership for Family Reading: the Abington Avenue School, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School, Mt. Pleasant School, McKinley School, Broadway Elementary School, E. Alma Flagg School, and Dr. William H. Horton School. Their administrators and staff helped in innumerable ways, from juggling schedules, to providing refreshments for parent meetings, to reading aloud to children and parents. No school-based program could succeed without their active involvement.

Key staff from the participating schools were responsible for implementing Family Reading. True pioneers, they set out to do what had not been done before in their schools, and despite vicissitudes, persisted and succeeded. Working with this group of dedicated professionals has been an inspiration to me. Warm thanks to Lenore Furman (Abington Avenue School), Sandra Carida and Yvonne Troublefield (Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School), Diane Bernstein and Kathryn Cassidy (Mt. Pleasant School), Jean Richardson (McKinley School), Louise DeStefano and Arlene Zappulla (Broadway Elementary School), Jacqueline Iweagwu (E. Alma Flagg School), and Gwendolyn Gunthorpe (Dr. William H. Horton School). All contributed suggestions for the contents of this Manual. In addition, Sandra Carida, Lenore Furman, and Jacqueline Iweagwu helped plan the first draft, and Ms. Carida and Ms. Furman gave thoughtful reviews of subsequent drafts.

Finally, the support of the Metropolitan Life Foundation is gratefully acknowledged. The grant provided personnel, teacher stipends, and much needed supplies of interesting children's trade books for the participating schools.

Although the project officially ended in December 1990, Family Reading activities continue in most of the participating schools. Also, with support from both the college and school district, staff from eleven additional schools received training in Family Reading and are planning to institute family workshops. From a small beginning, the program has continued to grow and to extend the benefits of Family Reading to an increasing number of children, families and teachers.

Ruth D. Handel
Director, Partnership for Family Reading
May 1991

OVERVIEW

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING
MONTCLAIR STATE / NEWARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Goal of the Partnership

To help parents and other adult family members support their children's literacy development

Features

- Guided by research on the importance of family involvement in literacy and learning

- Guided by principles of adult learning and motivation
  - Builds on parents' motivation to help their children
  - Offers workshops that are participatory, enjoyable, and instructive
  - Fosters adult as well as child reading development

- Focuses on interesting children's books and an integrated approach to developing reading strategies
  - Develops familiarity with quality literature
  - Demonstrates reading strategies using children's literature
  - Incorporates literature-based reading approaches

- Presents a positive model of reading and the learner

- Develops teacher competencies in working with adults

- Provides for site-specific adaptations and extensions of the program

Activities

- Workshops for adult family members
  - These sessions in the schools included:
    - reading and discussing enjoyable children's books
    - learning reading strategies
    - other book-related and informational activities
    - borrowing books for home reading

- Joint adult-child activities
  - selecting books
  - adults and children reading together in the classroom
  - Family Reading Festival at Montclair State

- Staff development services
  - monthly meetings of key teachers with project director for collaborative work in parent participation and program issues

Organizational Factors

- Seven participating schools
- Program directed to grades K -3
- Personnel

  Montclair State project director and key staff from each participating school with the assistance of Newark's Office of Special Projects.

  Key staff included classroom teachers, librarians, and guidance counselors.

- Eighty family sessions held in participating schools, Sept. 1988-Dec. 1990

  Schools averaged five family sessions per year.

  Sessions averaged 90 minutes in length.

  Most sessions included the adult workshop, book borrowing, and reading in classrooms.

- Children's Books

  Grant funding supported classroom libraries of children's books for home borrowing.

  School libraries were opened to adult participants for an additional source of books.

Chronology

- 1987-8: Family Reading pilot phase with first one, then three schools.
- Summer 1988: The Partnership for Family Reading begins with the award of a grant from the Metropolitan Life Foundation. Seven schools participate through December 1990.
- Nov.1990-Feb. 1991: With support from Montclair State and the Newark Office of Special Projects, eleven additional schools receive staff development in Family Reading and begin to offer parent workshops. Family Reading parent workshops continue in the seven original schools.
- Spring 1991. Other Newark schools indicate interest. Plans are made for future staff development and extension to other school districts.

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING

Picture, if you will, the energy of a school reaching out to draw adult family members into a new and productive relationship with the school - one that will benefit the adults, the children, and the educational institution alike. That was the vision of the Partnership for Family Reading in its work on behalf of literacy development.

The Partnership for Family Reading operated as a school-based and college-supported program of services for adult family members and their young children. It worked to forge links between school and home in order to foster the reading development of primary grade children. The project was called a "Partnership" in recognition of the importance of home-school collaboration in the educational process and to focus on the need for collaborative efforts to address or prevent problems of academic underachievement The term "Partnership" also reflects the contribution of an institution of higher education working together with both school and home toward that end. The term "Family Reading," reflects the goal of fostering reading activities that involve and benefit all members of the family. It also recognizes that adult caretakers include grandparents, aunts, uncles and older siblings as well as parents, all of whom have participated in Partnership activities.

The Partnership for Family Reading draws on the large body of research that finds connections between student achievement and parent involvement in schooling. Literacy research tells us that children who are read to at home and who see their parents reading are more likely to become good readers themselves. It also tells us that problems of literacy are intergenerational, not confined to one generation alone, and that working with the adults may be one way to help their children. The Partnership attempted to translate that research into practice.

Many urban schools today are seeking ways to increase family participation in the school. The Partnership for Family Reading is part of that national effort. Primarily, however, programs such as the Partnership are influenced by and sensitive to the context of the school in which they are lodged; contextual factors help determine their design, implementation process, and outcomes. Programs will proceed differently in schools in which they are part of an existing or energetically projected mission for family involvement as compared to schools in which the program is a unique venture. Both situations existed in Partnership schools. In both cases, the hope was to institutionalize the program as part of the usual practice of the school.

Family involvement can take various forms. In the Partnership , the focus has been on helping adult caregivers foster the reading achievement of their children through the appropriate and enjoyable activity of reading and discussing children's books. In-school workshops have shown parents how to use reading strategies that are of benefit to the adult reader as well. The major activities of the Partnership were (a) workshops for adult family members; (b) joint adult-child activities; and (c) staff development services.

WORKSHOPS FOR ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS

With the goal of involving parents and other adult family members in the reading process, Partnership schools instituted informal workshops or demonstration sessions in which adult caregivers became familiar with quality children's books and learned ways of reading and discussing them with their children. The instructional focus of the informal workshops was on reading comprehension in which good reader strategies and whole language approaches to children's literature were used. All reading strategies were presented within the context of reading enjoyable children's fiction and nonfiction books. Parents were viewed both as resources for their children and as learners in their own right. They were eager to help their children, but many needed assistance in learning how.

Parent sessions in the schools have included: awareness and informational meetings about children's books and reading; read-alouds; demonstrations of interactive discussion and reading comprehension strategies; story-telling; dramatizations and hands-on activities; trips to the public library; student performances; parent recognition meetings; and structured Family Reading workshops.

The Partnership was a collaborative and participatory enterprise. That meant that activities took a somewhat different form in each school, given the differing contributions of the key teachers as well as the particular realities of each school site. For example, some schools did not have libraries or meeting space available and all parent activities had to be centered in the classroom. In addition, the length of the project meant the program could grow organically with much variation within the same school. In one case, a school began with demonstration workshops conducted by the project director, then proceeded to a variety of informational, story-telling and hands-on sessions, and is now implementing a series of more structured Family Reading workshops.

Over the course of the project, a total of twenty-six classrooms in the seven schools invited parents or other adult family members to attend the in-school workshops. The majority were kindergarten and first grades, although several second and third grades participated from the beginning and others joined later at parents' request as students advanced in grade. In all, eighty sessions for adult family members took place.

The activities promoted motivation to read, familiarity with children's books and stories, and the incorporation of reading comprehension strategies using the children's books. What was vital to the sessions was a sociable, enjoyable atmosphere for the adults, teachers who appreciate the importance of parent involvement, administrative support, and a supply of quality children's literature.

JOINT ADULT-CHILD ACTIVITIES

Book borrowing and reading to children in school and/or at home was always part of the program. Classroom visits, eagerly anticipated by all, gave parents an opportunity to practice the reading strategies and share books with the children immediately after the workshop. Books would also be borrowed for reading to children at home. Access to books for home reading was an especially vital service for urban families, many of whom did not use the public library or were inexperienced in selecting books for their children. School libraries and special classroom collections were made available to parents. Books were borrowed on workshop days and at designated times between workshop sessions as well.

An additional parent-child activity was trips to the Montclair State campus each spring for a Family Reading Festival.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development to support parent involvement was a major aspect of the Partnership. Services were provided by the Montclair State project director to assist key staff members introduce and maintain the program and negotiate its many logistical details. The seven participating schools had little recent history of successful parent involvement. Family Reading activities in particular were new to them.

The key staff responsible for implementing the program in their respective schools were volunteers. They included teachers grades K-3, librarians, and a guidance counselor. They met monthly with the project director in a series of after-school meetings throughout the course of the Partnership. Meeting topics included:

- needs and characteristics of parents
- relationship of parent involvement to school achievement
- up-dates on children's books and book selection
- workshops in reading comprehension using children's literature
- effective communication with parents
- ways to recruit and maintain parent participation
- ways to involve parents in the read-aloud and discussion experience.

The meetings also served a coordinating function for the project as key staff reported on developments in their schools and planned special events. Through the college director,

the Partnership maintained contact with a national network of researchers and practitioners in the field of parent involvement and that was reported on also. Guest speakers gave book talks and addressed issues of concern relating to inner city families and community organizations.

The most important function of the meetings, however, was to enable the group to act as a resource for idea development about the family sessions and about the important logistics of parent recruitment and supportive school services.

The project director also held informational and policy-setting sessions with school administrators and visited schools to give assistance on site.

OUTCOMES FOR FAMILIES, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS

The program served all family members not only the students directly involved. For example, as often happens in family programs, many of the adults became interested in reading for themselves and reported "picking up a book again." The majority of participants were parents, usually mothers, but with sessions also attended by grandparents, aunts, uncles and other adult relatives the Family Reading message was carried to the extended family as well. The sessions also benefited the younger sisters and brothers who were frequently brought to the sessions. Their enjoyment of the experience with school and stories often prompted the parents to remark that they "hadn't realized" that preschoolers would be interested in books. At home, all children in the family shared in the readings from books borrowed from the program.

Program evaluation indicated that for students, parents and teachers alike, the program was highly enjoyable and motivating. Students were excited about books and were reading more; library use by parents and children increased. Parents are now reading resources and role models to their children. They are reading more to their children at home, are establishing enjoyable reading relationships, and are fostering reading comprehension through discussion and questioning. Adults who seldom enjoyed books have become interested in reading for themselves or in advancing their own education, behaviors which further communicate the importance of reading in their own lives. Teachers have enjoyed fostering the parent-child reading relationship and have refined their professional skills in working with adults. Schools have seen increases in parent involvement and in positive relationships with the school.

As expected, parent participation in Family Reading varied by school. External factors such as an extremely disordered neighborhood or internal factors such as a lack of prior parent involvement or an unwelcoming atmosphere made successful recruitment of parents into the program especially difficult in some schools. However, for those many family members who did attend and participate, the Family Reading program proved beneficial.

FAMILIES AS LEARNERS AND AS RESOURCES

AS LEARNERS

Participating in family workshops
Observing classroom activities
Participating in out-of-school activities

AS LITERACY RESOURCES

Reading to children in school and home
Borrowing and providing books
Serving as reading role models
Sharing special abilities in school and home

AS SUPPORTERS OF READING ACHIEVEMENT

In the Home	**Providing, reading and discussing books** **Serving as reading role models**
In the School	**Participating in Family Sessions** **Volunteering in classrooms** **Becoming leaders of Family Reading programs**
In the Community	**Seeking employment or further education** **Extending Family Reading to relatives and friends**

The Partnership viewed parents and other adult family members as both learners and resources. That perspective informed the activities conducted by the participating schools. While the activities mounted by the schools may seem simple and straightforward, in many cases they involved both teachers and family members in roles and situations that were new to them. Teachers are accustomed to teaching children; few have had opportunities for working with parents in an informal and effective way. It was important to realize, too, that some parents are likely to feel intimidated by schools, or feel that only the teacher has useful knowledge about reading and academics. Family members may remember unfortunate school experiences of their own or may associate school with "bad news" about their child. In contrast, the Partnership provided a unique opportunity to hear and share the good news about children.

The welcoming, relaxed atmosphere of Family Reading sessions were vital to their success. Conducted in an informal atmosphere, key elements of the sessions were:

- refreshments and time for sociability
- opportunities for interaction among participants
- instruction that centered on enjoyable books and activities
- instruction that drew on the adults' talents and resources
- instruction that was experiential, not didactic, and proceeded on the assumption that adults will learn more from participating and contributing their own ideas and experiences than by a "top-down" lecture or presentation of general principles alone
- books selected for their appeal to adults as well as children
- gender-fair and multicultural books representing a range of ethnic groups
- books that accommodated diverse reading levels. Books ranged from wordless picture books to short chapter books; adults borrowed those with which they were comfortable.
- books and program materials in the parents' home language
- a flexible program attuned to participants' needs. Workshop activities could be shortened to give adults and children more time together in classrooms, or the entire ninety minute session could be devoted to the adult workshop.

The following section presents a fuller description of Partnership operations and their linkage to the concepts by which they were guided.

FAMILIES AS LEARNERS: PARTICIPATING IN PARENT WORKSHOPS

Low key instruction was provided on children's books and how to foster reading comprehension using them. The instruction has varied from highly structured workshops to informal demonstrations of how to read with expression and ask questions to evoke comprehension. Other literacy-related activities have included story-telling, puppet-making, reading games, student performances, and guest speakers. At the last session of the year, parents received certificates in recognition of their efforts.

Parent workshops have followed two formats: In most schools, parents met separately in a library or conference room. In some schools, however, where such facilities are unavailable or inconvenient, the instruction was provided in the classroom by the classroom teacher who demonstrated reading and discussion strategies with the class, explaining to the parents as she does so. The first format allows for greater flexibility of programming and more interaction among the adults. The second provides more opportunities for insight into how teachers work with students and for observation of an expert reader.

FAMILIES AS LEARNERS: OBSERVING IN THE CLASSROOM

Since the program involved parent access to the classroom either during the instructional segment or during read-alouds to children, opportunities for informal observations and for teacher-parent interaction increased. Many parents indicated that they gained a realistic picture of classroom life, of the teacher's role and of their own child's functioning in school. Parents enjoyed hearing stories read by the teacher. They were observed to replicate the teacher behaviors when reading to their own children in the classroom. Teachers, in turn, observed aspects of parent-child relationships that they had not had an opportunity to see before.

FAMILIES AS LEARNERS: ATTENDING OUT-OF-SCHOOL EVENTS

The annual Family Reading Festivals at Montclair State and an earlier Conference on Families and School Achievement were additional opportunities for learning. An especially meaningful aspect was the fact of being on the Montclair campus. Most parents and children had not been on a college campus before; indeed some had seldom ventured out of their home communities. Parents indicated that the campus visit raised their expectations for their children and opened up for them the possibilities of higher education.

Closer to home, scheduled trips to the neighborhood public library familiarized parents and children with available resources and the benefits of library use. In one kindergarten, children and adults applied for library cards together.

FAMILIES AS RESOURCES: READING TO CHILDREN IN SCHOOL

After the instructional segment, parents read to their children and put into practice what they had learned. Adults and children looked forward to reading together and their enjoyment was apparent to all observers. Books were usually selected by both parent and child. The adults reported increased confidence as well as skill in reading aloud with expression, asking questions, and becoming responsive to the child's interests. As children became more proficient, they were encouraged to read as well.

Most readings took place in classrooms and, since not all children had a family member present, parents would read to their child plus several others. The room would be filled with groups of three or four children clustered around an adult. Teachers, administrators, and aides would read too.

In some cases, it seemed more appropriate to bring the children whose parents were present into a central location and the reading was done there. That alternative was particularly useful when several classrooms were involved in the program, but only a few parents from each were in attendance.

FAMILIES AS RESOURCES: READING TO CHILDREN AT HOME

Family workshops and the availability of interesting children's books were the catalysts that led to more reading at home. Informal teacher-parent contact confirmed that books were being read and enjoyed at home. Students, also, spoke eagerly to their teachers about the home reading.

In addition to an increase in the quantity of reading - in itself an important factor in reading proficiency - it is likely that the reading comprehension of adults and children improved. Adults were learning to be strategic and purposeful readers. As one mother said, "I used to think reading was just reading the words. Now I know it's thinking and discussing as well."

FAMILIES AS RESOURCES: BORROWING AND PROVIDING BOOKS

The accessibility of interesting, quality children's books in the schools was a vital part of the program. Special classroom libraries and school libraries were opened to parents. Usually, both parents and children selected the books for home reading. At first, books were lent only to parents who attended the family sessions, but soon additional times for borrowing were arranged thereby providing continuity of parent-teacher contact between the scheduled sessions. As the frequency of home reading increased, books were

lent to students as well. That accommodated parents who wished to participate in some way, but could not attend the school meetings.

Parents also looked to outside resources, taking their children to the public library and making increased use of bookmobiles in their neighborhood.

FAMILIES AS RESOURCES: SHARING SPECIAL ABILITIES

Special abilities were developed in some of the instructional sessions as parents learned to be storytellers, made puppets to dramatize stories, or wrote their own stories to pictures.

FAMILIES AS RESOURCES: SERVING AS READING ROLE MODELS

Adult family members promoted their children's development by becoming readers themselves. Many reported that reading the children's books whetted their appetites for adult reading, a practice they had largely abandoned. Interestingly, parents began to use the school library as a resource for themselves and to ask the school librarian for book recommendations in areas of adult interest. Since parents are potent role models for their children, an increase in books and adult reading in the household is likely to have a positive impact.

IN SUMMARY: FAMILIES AS SUPPORTERS OF READING ACHIEVEMENT

Parents who bring books into the home for themselves and their children, who participate in the family sessions at school and who read to their children at home foster good reader behaviors and reading achievement. Their involvement tells children that important adults consider reading worthy of an investment of time.

During the second year of the Partnership, the school reading curriculum changed to include more literature and more whole language strategies similar to those taught in the family sessions. Thus the home began reinforcing school learning in a very direct way.

Children in the Partnership were delighted when their parents brought home books from school. Reading relationships between parent and child developed, enjoyment of reading grew and children learned comprehension strategies that enabled them to be active participants in the learning process.

Other activities of parents that sent a message to children about reading and academic achievement include volunteering in classrooms, assisting with book borrowing and other aspects of Family Reading, and planning further education for themselves. In one school, mothers have begun to take leadership of the program by organizing and conducting the

family sessions themselves. At least four participants have obtained jobs as teacher aides, positions in which they are using their knowledge of reading to good advantage. Others are enrolled in GED classes or report plans for further education. Also, many participants have extended Family Reading to relatives and neighbors. Activities of this type are meaningful in terms of the family members' own adult development and in terms of their status in the community.

OUTLINE OF FAMILY WORKSHOPS

Over the course of the Partnership a variety of activities were incorporated into the family sessions. All had the goal of building enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading. The importance of the parent to the child's reading development was stressed throughout.

The workshops sought to offer activities of substance that were sensitive to parents' wishes but did not overload them with masses of information. The structured Family Reading workshops (see Appendix) presented generic reading strategies applicable to adult as well as child reading development. Other activities were focused more directly on children's learning. However, all activities had the effect of stimulating adults to become involved in reading or educational activities themselves.

In Partnership schools, the initial workshop of the year provided orientation and motivation. The final workshop recognized adults' efforts and awarded them certificates. The outline that follows describes the range of activities. Not all activities were conducted in every school.

Orientation and Motivation

Every initial parent session began with a presentation of children's books, book talks by the leader and book browsing by the adults. Enjoyment of the books and the importance of reading aloud to children was stressed. Familiarity with quality children's books was an important aim of the initial session.

Continuing Exposure to Children's Books

Presentation of new books continued throughout the year to broaden interests in genres and topics. Multicultural, non-sexist books are used in the program; books that speak to participants' particular background or experience were especially appealing.

Structured Family Reading Workshops

Structured Family Reading workshops were successfully implemented with parents in four schools during the Partnership and were later extended to eleven additional schools. Each workshop focused on a specific children's book representing a particular genre or topic and an accompanying reading strategy. Each workshop followed the same format (introductory activity, presentation of the children's book, demonstration of the reading strategy, practice in pairs, group discussion, and book borrowing). The workshops are experiential and participatory. Afterward, adults re-create the experience when reading to their child at home or in the classroom. Further details are given in the Appendix .

Story Reading

Story reading by the workshop leader or classroom teacher provided a model of skilled, fluent reading and the enjoyment of listening to a story read aloud. Parents loved hearing a good story! Many reported that they had learned to put more expression into their reading.

Reading Strategy Instruction

Instruction in reading comprehension was given through demonstration and modeling with the children's books. Such interactive reading strategies as making predictions; asking, evoking and responding to questions; connecting text with personal experience; and conducting discussions about books were demonstrated always with application to the book being read. Parent participation was encouraged. The instruction might be quite informal as in a classroom demonstration where the teacher gives only a brief explanation, or it might be more deliberate as in the structured Family Reading workshops. The linkage with the children's book and sociability of the session made the experience enjoyable.

Family Stories

A sequence of workshops in which participants heard a family story read or told, then told stories about their own family, then wrote or dictated those stories gave them a sense of their own contribution as storytellers. Family photographs were also used to stimulate family stories.

Story-telling

Story-telling rather than reading was a better alternative for parents who were not skilled readers. It was promoted as a valuable language activity.

Dramatizations and Related Activities

Additional participatory activities with books confirmed the parents' sense of active involvement and made them eager to try out new activities with their children. Included were such language development activities as acting out part of a story; joining in on a refrain; making paper plate puppets to dramatize a story; writing an ending to a story; creating a story using wordless picture books; and analyzing illustrations as a source of information, to promote observation skills as well as language development.

Other activities were making and playing reading games, and doing something suggested by a story. For example, prompted by *I Walk and Read* by Tana Hoban, one

school took parents and children on a neighborhood walk to observe street signs and other writing outdoors, an excursion that helped extend the purposes and occasions for reading. The walk ended at the branch library where children applied for cards.

Children's Literacy Behaviors

Discussing children's reading behavior and providing developmental guideposts occurred at many of the sessions. Kindergarten parents were especially interested in understanding the meaning of such emergent literacy behaviors as book-handling, pretend reading, and requests for repeated readings of the same story. Much information-sharing among parents went on.

Guidelines for Reading to Children

General information was provided about ways to promote reading. Guidelines for reading aloud and book selection were distributed and discussed. It was also necessary to provide information about the location of book stores and public libraries and how to obtain library cards. Announcements were made of television shows with reading tie-ins such as the PBS Reading Rainbow series. Some parents wanted to learn about children's magazines.

Special Guests

Guest speakers, storytellers, dignitaries from the central office and the participation of school administrators added variety to the sessions. Frequently, the special guests would share stories or read aloud to the group.

Connections to Other Activities

Other school reading events were integrated into the sessions. For example, both programs benefitted when a reading incentive program for students that was operating in all Newark schools was publicized to parents and included in Family Reading. In several schools, information about other educational and community services was provided through scheduling joint meetings. A Family Reading Festival at Montclair State was a special Saturday event for parents and children each spring. Essentially a celebration of families reading together, the Festival included gift books for each child, books for sale, workshops for parents and children, and performances by Montclair State students.

Family Recognition

End of the year sessions featured a ceremony at which parents and other adult caregivers received certificates in recognition of their contribution to family reading. Often, children would perform for parents at this time.

BOOK BORROWING AND READING TO CHILDREN

Reading to children in classrooms and book borrowing followed the activities outlined above.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND LOGISTICS

From the experience of the Partnership, it is fair to say that Family Reading is a labor-intensive program. It is not a job for one person alone. In addition to planning and conducting parent sessions, Family Reading calls for oversight of books and book borrowing, intensive outreach and publicity, preparing and distributing invitations, and providing refreshments and workshop materials. Time spent with parents will increase and, as with any program, unexpected events will abound.

Collaboration is the key. Experience in the Partnership shows that cooperation and support of administrators, librarians, parent leaders and teachers are necessary to ensure successful operation.

The following suggestions are offered for schools contemplating a parent program.

GETTING STARTED

The first step is to assemble key people and obtain their support and their ideas. The group should involve parents and community leaders as well as school personnel.

While there will be interest in the specific details of Family Reading, it is also important to take a good look at the overall context in which the program will operate. What is the school's history in involving parents? Is parent participation an important part of the school's mission? Is there a comprehensive plan for family involvement? What has actually happened in the school? Where are the pitfalls and what successful practices can be emulated?

Obviously, a school that envisions Family Reading as part of a comprehensive plan or a school that has a successful record of family involvement will find more ready success in instituting the program. A school that adopts Family Reading as its first venture in parent involvement will be operating on a trial and error basis initially. For those schools, Family Reading may serve to stimulate the development of school policy and to open the door to greater family participation in the future.

Another important step is to assess your parent population. What appears to be their general level of education, what languages are they comfortable with, what are their needs and interests, what are their reading practices with their children now? What is the record of attendance at PTO meetings, open school nights, and other parent functions? What factors appear to be determining participation or its lack? Some of this information may be known; some may have to be developed. Parents will be valuable informants in these initial stages. (The Appendix provides a sample data form for obtaining information about reading from parents.)

Intertwined with these issues is the question of resources. What resources of material, funding, time and staff are available to the school? Who will have administrative responsibility for the program? Which staff members need training?

Finally, decide what grade levels should be targeted and what program activities have the best chance of success given the history of your school, the needs and wishes of your parents, and specific educational goals for your students. For example, should the program start with teachers reading and demonstrating in classrooms rather than the separate workshops. How many classes should be involved? What about program content and scheduling?

Keeping the school community informed and welcoming their ideas during this planning stage is likely to pay dividends in support as the program begins.

STAFFING THE PROGRAM

Family Reading staff should enjoy working with adults and be sensitive to the needs and abilities of family members. Most elementary teachers and librarians are familiar with children's literature and reading comprehension strategies, but may need to consider how to share their knowledge with adults in an appropriate and informal way.

Creation of the position of parent coordinator is the ideal way to give leadership to Family Reading and to underline its importance. One Partnership school has done so, as have a growing number of schools in other parts of the country. In any case, a Family Reading team, rather than one individual alone, should staff the program.

As in the Partnership, classroom teachers, librarians, and guidance counselors can conduct the workshops and maintain outreach to parents, as can administrators and in some cases school aides. Rotation of assignments in running the program is an important benefit of the team approach.

It is important to ensure that individuals on the Family Reading team are in a position to have easy and on-going access to parents. Typically, kindergarten teachers are the ones who tend to see parents most often since adults frequently accompany the young children to school. Other staff will probably need to be more proactive in reaching out to parents.

School aides who live in the community and have informal contacts with other parents can be a vital home-school link. Generally, the parents themselves, whether school aides, volunteers, PTA officers, or simply interested individuals, are your best sources of publicity and your best barometers of progress. Their participation on a Family Reading team can be essential to program success.

GRADE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATING STUDENTS

It is generally best to start with kindergarten or first grade because parents of these students tend to be most eager to work with their young children. Building on a base of participating parents, the program may be extended to the next grade the following year. In several Partnership schools, the program was expanded to grades two and three at the request of parents who had participated at earlier levels. In one school, parents of fourth graders attend - again at their own request.

SCHEDULING THE SESSIONS

Consider convenience when scheduling the family sessions. An initial orientation session or survey of parents can serve as a guide to preferred times. In general, daytime meetings work best when scheduled to coincide with times parents accompany their children to or from school, that is, first thing in the morning or before dismissal. That way parents can attend workshops without making a special trip. Breakfast, early evening or Saturday events are alternatives for family members who cannot attend during the workday.

Other lessons learned in the Partnership are:

- Do not schedule sessions on days when AFDC checks are due. Those parents will be busy with personal matters and will not attend.

- Midweek schedules work best. Avoid Mondays and days following a holiday.

- Try to have some flexibility in beginning or ending the session. Often, parents with preschoolers arrive late or have to leave early. Session length should generally not exceed 90 minutes.

- Partnership schools averaged five or six sessions a year, supplemented by parent book borrowing between sessions.

- Initially, schools held sessions at intervals of about six weeks. While this scheduling distributed the pressure on key staff, some continuity was sacrificed and in some cases the task of recruiting participants had to begin anew each time. However, no disadvantage was experienced by a school in which the program was

particularly well-run and much book borrowing and parent contact occurred in the intervals between family sessions.

• Scheduling also depends on the type of workshop offered. Schools that instituted structured Family Reading workshops held them at closer intervals. For example, one school held an introductory session in the fall, two Family Reading workshops in successive weeks in December, two additional Family Reading workshops in successive weeks in early spring, and a final session later in the spring. Since the structured workshops are linked parents—report to one another on their home reading experiences with workshop books—they should be scheduled relatively close together. Continuity and economy of time were the advantages; invitations and other materials needed to be prepared only once for each workshop series.

• Choose a workshop location with parent comfort and ease of visiting classrooms in mind.

• Choose or create a reading environment. Meet in a book-filled library or classroom. If that is not possible, bring a supply of books to the room that is available.

• Coordinating Family Reading sessions with a related school function, such as open house or a Chapter 1 meeting, was successfully done in several Partnership schools. Combine or piggyback on events whenever possible. Try to build Family Reading into the school schedule. The aim is to make it an integral part of school functioning.

WORKSHOP STAFF AND SUPPLIES

• The workshop leader should be well-prepared, flexible, and prepared to handle the surprises that attend any public event. Teachers, librarians, administrators, aides, and parents can take on this role. The presence of school administrators lends special importance to the workshops. In the Partnership, administrators often participated in story-reading or in leading the session.

• Provide a translator for participants whose English is limited.

• Accommodate parents who attend workshops with their preschool children by providing books, space to play and childcare if possible. Upper grade children may be assigned to help. Partnership sessions experienced only minimal disruption and much pleasure from the presence of the preschoolers; they were eager to look at books and have their parents read to them.

• Refreshments and books are indispensable at all sessions. Refreshments establish a welcoming atmosphere and promote social interaction. For some parents, the food in school was a welcome contribution to personal nutrition.

• Many different books representing a range of children's literature genres were used in the Partnership. The genres and the purposes for which they were presented included:

Folk tales from many cultures - for multicultural learning and for learning about predictable story structure

Family stories - for relating text events to personal experience and for encouraging storytelling

Informational nonfiction - for experience with expository prose as well as building general knowledge

Wordless picture books - for oral language development

Poetry - for sensitivity to word choice and rhythm

Fables - for understanding purpose and main idea

Classic fairy tales - to acquaint families with stories that were unfamiliar to many

Most books were picture books. Humor was an element especially sought. All books helped develop analytical thinking, oral language skills, and vocabulary.

• Specific titles for the workshop presentations depended on the characteristics and interests of the families as well as personal favorites of the staff. There is a wealth of quality children's books available today.

• Library media specialists and children's librarians can assist in making appropriate selections. The Appendix to this Manual lists other resources for book selection, as well as the books used in structured Family Reading workshops.

• Provide a range of books on a variety of reading levels. Let parents select the books they wish to read or borrow. They will choose those with which they are comfortable.

• Include books in the parents' home language. Many children's books appear in both English and Spanish translations.

• Public libraries will often supplement a school library by lending a "bookshelf of books" to classroom teachers.

• Other materials needed are : invitations; reminder notices; sign-in sheets; and certificates to be awarded at the final session. Certificates may be purchased from stationary supply houses or computer generated at the school. See the Appendix for a sample.

BOOK BORROWING

Partnership schools established special classroom libraries and opened school libraries for book borrowing by parents. Although there was some inevitable loss of books, in six of the seven school such losses were minor. Books were borrowed for home reading at the end of the family session or at other designated times during the week.

A simple record-keeping system was devised. Parents signed out books from classroom libraries on file cards headed by the family name. That also created a record of which families were reading Partnership books.

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Designing interesting, appropriate family sessions is only part of the job. Participants must be recruited to attend, and for this, too, preparation and planning are essential. In addition, recruitment must be continuous throughout the course of the program. The experience of the Partnership in this regard is typical of programs nationwide.

While parents generally try to act in their children's welfare and many will be glad of the chance to participate, others will be more difficult to persuade. In urban communities particularly, many parents are not used to attending school events or they may equate a visit to the school with hearing bad news about their child. Some may have had unpleasant school experiences themselves. Others are simply involved with daily chores or problems.

Emphasize the positive. In all phases of recruitment and family contact, focus on Family Reading as a positive, "good news" program. Parents will not be receiving negative reports about their child; rather they are coming into a program that values the abilities of every adult and child and that fosters enjoyable family reading relationships. Relationships between school staff and parents become closer and more gratifying also.

All family members are welcome. Make plain that it is not necessary to be a parent to participate. The program is open to all adult caregivers. Grandparents, uncles, aunts, and older brothers or sisters have all attended Family Reading. Sometimes they substitute for a parent who works outside the community. Extend a special welcome, too to parents who occasionally are able to take an hour off from work to attend, as happened in the Partnership. Schedule evening meetings for those parents as feasible.

Be aware of participants' goals. From a recruitment perspective, it is helpful to realize that adults may have different reasons for attending the program. Some may seek recognition for what they are already doing in reading at home. Others may want advice or help. Some may be attracted by the chance to socialize or by the refreshments. Some may find access to interesting books the most important part of the program. For others the joint adult-child activities in the classroom may be the highlight. In an informal and participatory atmosphere, these perspectives will emerge and help shape the program.

PERSONAL CONTACT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

The friendly smile, the interested remark, the sense that someone cares and relates to them as an individual are what attract and maintain parent participation. Personal contact is a critical element in family programs. Welcoming outreach can come from the child's

classroom teacher, specialized staff, administrators, parent leaders in the PTO and school improvement team, and from participating parents once the program had started. Telephone calls can supplement the face-to-face contact. The important point is that parents feel they have someone to relate to in the school.

WRITTEN MATERIALS

Written invitations and announcements should supplement the personal contact. They need to be prepared carefully. Generally speaking, it is more difficult to prepare short and simple documents than longer, complex ones so it is a good idea to save workable formats for future use.

Written announcements sent from the school should:

- use clear language
- be in the parents' home language as well as English
- look inviting - with color and photos if possible
- use the same program name or logo to identify the program each time
- include a time schedule
- list the program events including refreshments
- include the name of the child's teacher and other school staff involved
- avoid excessive detail and visual clutter.

Students' handmade invitations are exceptions to these rules, of course. Whatever they look like, they will be appealing to the recipients.

Invitations should request a reply. Reminder notices should be sent one or two days before the session.

PROGRAM PUBLICITY

Make the program visible in the school. Book posters, bulletin boards with colorful book jackets, posters or photos showing parents and children reading, and photos or videos of the program in operation will publicize Family Reading to the school community and arouse anticipation. Notices in school newsletters can announce the program as it begins, provide information on related events such as new library books, school services,

or reading-related tv shows, and give the reactions of parents and children as the program progresses. Testimonials by parents carry great weight.

External recognition by the district office or by community media can also build interest in the program.

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION

The children themselves can help bring parents in. In the Partnership, the students' handmade invitations and urgings motivated many parents to attend. Classroom teachers who kept the children informed about the sessions soon found the children urging their parents to attend. Especially meaningful were joint parent-child reading sessions in classrooms.

Student performances also attracted parents. Some popular ones are poetry recitals, reader's theater, or pantomimes to a story read aloud. They can be classroom based, conducted by individual teachers, or done as a part of a parent workshop. At holiday time and at the end of the year, readings by children was a way children thanked the adults for their participation.

TIMING

While recruitment may need to be continuous, it is important to take advantage of special occasions. Kindergarten registration is a good opportunity to inform incoming parents about Family Reading. In the fall, all meetings for parents can include orientation to Family Reading.

INCENTIVES AND RECOGNITION

Partnership schools, as virtually all other urban institutions that have parent programs, provided incentives for attendance and recognition for effort as ways to help recruit and maintain participation. Door prizes for parents were given in most schools. They included books, dictionaries, calendars, and small personal items. In one school, books were raffled. In several schools, the children were involved as well; classes with the greatest number of parents attending were awarded an ice cream or pizza party, an incentive that spurred on their encouragement of parental participation.

Slides or photos of the parents and children, displayed on school bulletin boards or given a special showing at the session, are ways to recognize and validate participation in the family program. Most meaningful, however, were the certificates for participation in family reading that were given at an end of the year ceremony in all Partnership schools. Adults were delighted to be awarded this simple recognition of their efforts., and children, seeing their parents so valued, learned something new about the importance of family participation in reading.

COLLABORATION AND INCLUSION

Collaborative activities that highlight the value of family participation will keep the program on track and help recruit and maintain participation. It will be helpful to:

• Involve all other school organizations and appropriate community and religious leaders in recruiting parents and advising on their needs.

• Periodically survey parents' interests and be aware of changes. Is the program meeting their needs? Is the program designed so that they feel they are participating in something that is important? Involve parents in setting the agenda of the program and in leading activities. The aim is a program that makes family members feel they are truly valued as educational partners.

• Periodically critique the atmosphere of your school. What sort of welcome do the school and classrooms convey? Consider the physical arrangements, hall displays, written and oral communication styles of the people in your school. Do parents have easy access to the school? When can they visit? Do they know how to make appointments to meet with teachers?

IN SUMMARY

The process of recruiting can be time-consuming. Try not to be discouraged. Much time is needed to establish a new program and nothing works with all people all the time. Nationally, all parent involvement programs experience difficulty with parent recruitment especially in the beginning and regardless of the socioeconomic status of the families or communities involved.

Not all Partnership schools have been uniformly successful with recruitment. As might be expected, internal factors such as school organization and support and external community factors such as neighborhood safety, family disorganization, or a history of poor relationships will influence the functioning of any program that attempts to link the two institutions of home and school. Consider these incidents from Partnership schools that illustrate some encouraging outcomes amid recruitment difficulties:

> A key teacher in one school, beginning the program, had worked hard to ensure attendance. The school had very little prior parent involvement. The neighborhood was among the most dangerous in the city. The morning of the workshop, only three parents came. Conquering her dismay, the teacher decided to proceed with the session. After all, she thought, these three parents had taken the trouble to come and they were eager to participate. The parents greatly appreciated the personalized instruction and said they had learned a great deal. They went on to become the core of a small parent group in the school.

> A second school was located in a part of the city with many school dropouts. When Family Reading was instituted, parents began coming back to the same school that they had left as pregnant teenagers. They wanted their children to have a better chance than they had had. They had "grown up," they said and now knew what was important. Some began talking about completing their own education.

Neither of these schools succeeded in building a large base of participating parents. Among other factors, community agencies needed to be involved. However, those parents who were reached profited from the program. Although attendance is lower that in other Partnership schools, parents in the first school have taken leadership in conducting family sessions. Children in the second school avidly borrow Family Reading books for their parents to read to them at home.

Schools that have established an on-going large base of participating parents are those in which key teachers have good access to parents and are strongly supported by the total school structure so that programs can be run effectively. After four years, two of the school have programs that appear firmly institutionalized. In two additional schools, Family Reading has been incorporated into and supported by a larger structure, a school-wide parent participation effort in one school, and a district Even Start program in the other.

Clearly, parent programs call for energetic efforts. Multiple strategies and persistence are often required. Creativity is needed. The message is: know your school and community; establish collaborative networks; brainstorm with colleagues; generate new ideas. Be prepared for surprises - and for surprising gratification.

EVALUATION OF FAMILY READING

Program evaluation substantiates program impact and guides program improvement. Evaluation should be a continuous process. After each parent session, the Family Reading team should debrief and assess the event. What went smoothly, what didn't? Which aspects of the session seemed successful, which need modification? Family Reading changes life in schools. What changes took place? What surprises, pleasant or unpleasant, occurred?

Assess all elements of Family Reading - recruitment, the parent workshop, reading in classrooms, book borrowing and home reading. Note any classroom carryovers or informal parent contact between sessions. The observations, comments and behaviors of participating parents and students as well as those of school staff should be recorded. A sample form is included in the Appendix.

In the Partnership, monthly meetings of key staff from the seven schools served as part of the assessment and program improvement process. Each year, summative evaluations from key staff and parents were also obtained. Sample forms are in the Appendix.

CONCLUSION

Family Reading emphasizes the positive. It is a program that provides learning in a relaxed atmosphere—learning in an enjoyable way.

Parents and children appreciated the children's books and the sociability was enjoyed by all. For many adults, the program became an opportunity to learn about books in a relaxed, non-threatening way for the first time. Parents reported a greater understanding of the reading process and began to think of themselves as educational resources for their children. They took pride in the development of their new skills.

Students became eager readers. Teachers reported increased reading at school and at home. Preschoolers became eager to look at books as well.

For key staff members, the Partnership was hard, but worthwhile, work that expanded their professional capabilities as they saw themselves performing valuable services to adults as well as children. For the school as an institution, Family Reading fostered parent involvement in other school activities and helped the school fulfill its mission of creating linkages with home and community.

This Manual is presented to help you start on the rewarding adventure of Family Reading.

APPENDIX

FAMILIES COME TO SCHOOL- SOME TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES

1. **Make parents and other family members feel welcome and important.**

2. Communicate that **they have a lot to give to their child.** Some parents do not realize that they have an important role as home educator.

3. **Be flexible**; the adults may have special needs. Some may come late or have to leave early. Some may bring younger siblings with them.

4. **Choose a story for reading that you particularly like and let parents see your own enjoyment.**

5. **When reading a story, focus on one interactive reading technique.** Avoid overloading participants with many strategies at one.

6. **Beforehand, tell the parents what you will be doing during the reading. Explain the importance of the strategy and demonstrate it. Afterward, suggest that they try to do the same when reading to their child.**

Examples of strategies to use are: evoking participation; asking children to join in on a refrain; asking questions about what will happen next; asking children to describe or make predictions about the story from the pictures; discussing how the story relates to the child's other experiences.

7. **Use clear, non-technical language and specific examples.** Be aware that parents may not be familiar with reading practices.

8. When conducting a session in your classroom, **read only one story** to the assembled group. The parents will be eager to begin reading to their own child.

9. **Encourage parents to borrow books**, either from your special classroom collection or from the school library. Have a few titles in mind in case you're asked for suggestions.

10. **Ask family members to spread the word about Family Reading and bring a friend to the next meeting.**

Remember, **enjoyment of the reading experiences in your school and classroom will keep family members coming back.**

LOGISTICS and MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Using School and Community Resources

- Informing colleagues
- Consulting with colleagues
- Enlisting support of key staff members
- Enlisting support of parents and community leaders
- Using talents and special abilities of colleagues, parents, and community leaders
- Coordinating with other school events and organizations
- Using school and community meetings and publications to describe and report on the program
- Using public libraries and other community resources
- Seeking sources of additional funds

Scheduling

- Planning Sessions: Time - Place - Personnel
- Family Workshops: Time - Place - Personnel

Recruitment of Participants

- Personal contacts with parents and other family members
- Publicity ir school and community
- Classroom announcements

Organizational Activities for the Family Sessions

- Invitations: composing, duplicating, distributing, collecting responses
- Duplicating workshop forms
- Establishing a parent lending library
- Establishing a system for book borrowing
- Establishing a system for recording attendance at parent sessions
- Establishing a system for reporting observations of the sessions
- Providing refreshments
- Setting up the room for the parent session
- Providing certificates of recognition

Evaluation

- Establishing a system for program evaluation

Home Reading Survey

Name_____

Dear Parent: Our school is starting a Family Reading program. Please help us by answering these questions Thank you.

1. How often do you or other adults at home read a story to your child?
   every day_____
   a few times a week_____
   once a week_____
   once or twice a month_____
   less than once a month_____

2. In what language do you read? English___ Spanish____ Portuguese___

   Other (please list)_____

3. How often do other children in your family read aloud to your child?
   very often____ sometimes_____ hardly ever ____ no other children in the family___

4. How often does your child read or talk about stories to you or others in the family?
   very often_____ sometimes_____ hardly ever ____

5. What is your child's favorite story or book? _____

6. How many books does your child have at home?
   no books _____
   1-5 books _____
   6-10 books _____
   11-20 books _____
   more than 20 books _____

7. How many books for other children in the family are in your home?
   no books _____
   1-5 books _____
   6-10 books _____
   11-20 books _____
   more than 20 books _____

8. How often are books borrowed from the library for your child?
   do not go to the library _____
   once or twice a year _____
   about once a month _____
   every two weeks _____
   about once a week _____

9. Which reading materials for adults are in your home?
   newspapers yes___ no ___
   magazines yes___ no ___
   books yes___ no ___

10. Would you like to learn more about reading at home with your child? Yes___ No____

PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING
Montclair State College - Newark Public Schools

REPORT FORM for FAMILY SESSIONS

1. School_____ Your Name_____

2. Date of Parent Session _____

3. Number of parents attending_____ any other relatives? _____

4. Number & grade levels of classrooms that parents visited:_____ _____

5. Did parents meet as a workshop group?____ Where? _____

6.# of Teachers involved _____

7. Other school personnel attending workshop or classroom session _____

8. What happened during the session? Describe as specifically as possible Who - Did What and How - during:

   a. Presentation by teacher or administrator

   b. Parent participation in group or classroom

   c. Student reaction during reading

   d. Refreshments/socializing

   e. Book borrowing: how many parents borrowed books?

9. Your reactions and comments: What seemed especially interesting or important? What did you observe about the parents? or the children? What comments did parents make? Other reactions?

10. How many parents are borrowing books between sessions?___ Any observations, incidents or reactions to report?

Partnership for Family Reading

STAFF EVALUATION FORM

Questions are answered in writing on separate sheets of paper. Time: 20-30 minutes
Questions may also be used for oral interview

1. What are the most successful aspects of the Family Reading experience so far for YOU? .. Why?

2. In your view, what are the most successful aspects of Family Reading for the CHILDREN?.. Why?

3. In your view, what are the most successful aspects of Family Reading for the PARENTS?.. Why?

4. In what way do you feel parent involvement in Family Reading has helped or made a difference to the children?

5. Has parent involvement helped you or made a difference in your professional life?...How?

6. Do you see aspects of parents and parent-child relationships that you did not see or know of before Family Reading? Please explain.

7. Have you seen any changes in parents' attitudes or behaviors as a result of participating in the program?... Please explain. Please give specific examples. ... Please describe particular parents who participate a great deal, or who have gone on to jobs or additional education.

8. Do you think participating parents understand a teacher's role better as a result of their coming into the school?... Please explain. Please give specific examples, if possible.

9. What is a typical conversation or questions that parents ask at a Family Reading session?

10. Overall, what would you say YOU have learned from your increased contact with parents?

11. What have you learned from participating in other aspects of Family Reading? (such as planning programs, making arrangements, conducting programs, book borrowing, read-alouds in classrooms, Family Reading Festival, contact with Montclair director).

12. What aspect of the program do you find particularly gratifying?... Why?

13. What is the most troublesome aspect of the program for you?... Why?

14. What changes or improvement would you make ?

15. Involvement in Family Reading probably means some extra work for you. What keeps up your motivation to participate and stay involved?

16. What purpose do our staff meetings serve for you?...How satisfied are you with them and do you have any suggestions for future meetings.

17. Describe the support you have been getting from your school administrators?... Is there anything else you would like them to do?

18. Would you recommend continuance of the program in your school? If so, what possible changes or additions would you suggest? Are you willing to continue serving as key Family Reading staff?

PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING
PARENT EVALUATION FORM

Dear Parent:

Please take a few minutes to fill out this evaluation form for our Family Reading Program. Your responses will help us plan for next year's program. All of your comments will be very much appreciated. Thank you!

Name _____

1. WORKSHOPS: I attended ___ workshops this year.

The workshops I attended were (please circle a number)

5	4	3	2	1
very helpful		somewhat helpful		not helpful

2. LENDING LIBRARY OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS: The lending library was

5	4	3	2	1
very helpful		somewhat helpful		not helpful

I borrowed approximately _____ books from the school this year.

3. READING IN THE CLASSROOM: Reading to my child in the classroom was

5	4	3	2	1
very enjoyable		somewhat enjoyable		not enjoyable

4. READING AT HOME: Reading to my child at home was

5	4	3	2	1
very enjoyable		somewhat enjoyable		not enjoyable

5. WHICH PART OF THE PROGRAM DID YOU LIKE BEST?

Book borrowing ____

Reading interesting children's books ___

Workshop presentations ____

Seeing your child's teacher ____

Reading to your child in the classroom ____

Reading to your child at home _____

Other (please specify) _____

What did you learn from participating in Family Reading? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did your child learn from participating in Family Reading? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Suggestions and comments about Family Reading: _____

_____

_____

_____

SELECTED RESOURCES for FAMILY PROGRAMS
and
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

1. The structured Family Reading Workshops used in the Partnership are adaptations of workshops designed by Ruth D. Handel and Ellen Goldsmith as part of an intergenerational literacy curriculum. The curriculum includes children's literature, interactive reading strategies, and optional adult selections. Like the Partnership, the goal is to foster reading competencies of adults as well as children and to help family members establish positive reading relationships.

The Handel/Goldsmith curriculum, entitled *Family Reading: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy*, was published by New Readers Press, Syracuse, NY, in 1990. Materials include a teacher's guide, photocopy masters, training manual and video. Children's books used in the program are also available from the publisher.

Newark schools received training in the structured Family Reading Workshops. The pages that follow present the Family Reading model and an outline of readings and strategies.

2. Parent involvement in education is a national movement with a great variety of professional, scholarly and lay organizations participating in policy formation, delivery of services and research. Recent special issues of education journals that give a conceptual framework as well as reports on action projects include:

Epstein, J. et al. Paths to Partnership: What we can learn from federal, state district, and school initiatives. *Phi Delta Kappan* , January 1991, pp. 344-388.

Strengthening partnerships with parents and community. *Educational Leadership*, October 1989, 47 (2), pp. 4-67

With specific reference to literacy, a handbook published by The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy (1002 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Washington DC 20007) describes ten "pioneering" programs including some school-based programs. The title of the publication is:

First Teachers: A family literacy handbook for parents, policy-makers, and literacy providers.

Two monthly publications of the International Reading Association (800 Barksdale Road, Newark DE 19711) regularly contain articles on parent involvement in reading. They are:

The Reading Teacher, a journal for elementary grade teachers
and *Reading Today*, the Association's newspaper.

3. Pamphlets for parents on such topics as selecting children's books, how to read aloud, and tv and reading are useful handouts for parent meetings. Reading Is Fundamental (P.O. Box 23444, Washington, DC 20026) publishes especially attractive and readable pamphlets with titles available in English and Spanish. The International Reading Association, the National Education Association, and other organizations also publish parent pamphlets.

4. Resources for book selection include brochures published annually by the American Library Association (50 East Huron Street, Chicago IL, 60611) listing Notable Children's Books and Award-Winning Books, listings of the Caldecott and Newbery Award books and of "Reading Rainbow" books often found in publishers' catalogs, and reviews of recent books in *The School Library Journal*, *The Reading Teacher*, and the *Bulletin* of the Council on Interracial Books for Children.

Books of bibliographies abound. Three that the Partnership found most helpful are *Family Storybook Reading* by Denny Taylor and Dorothy Strickland (1986, Heinemann Educational Publishers) which also explores the benefits of reading to children and presents many real-life family situations; Jim Trelease's *Read-Aloud Handbook* now in its third edition (1990, Penguin); and the *New York Times Parent's Guide to the Best Books for Children* by Eden Ross Lipson (1988, Times Books) which indexes books by age-appropriateness and theme.

In addition, enlist the expertise of your school media specialist or the children's librarian at a local public library.

5. Foreign language children's books are available from some major publishers and from specialized book distributors. Often foreign language titles will be available in English as well or are translations of books first published in English. Using the same book in different languages at a parent workshop helps accommodate participants with different backgrounds.

Family Reading Model

1. Introductory Activities

Memories of Reading and Storytelling (first workshop)
Reporting on Reading at Home (subsequent workshops)

2. Presentation of the Genre and the Children's Book

A brief description is given of the characteristics of the genre. Then the representative book is introduced together with examples of similar books.

3. Demonstration of the Reading Strategy

The reading strategy is introduced and demonstrated by the workshop leader using the children's book. The workshop leader goes through the steps of the strategy and talks aloud, reading the children's book and applying the strategy to it.

4. Practice in Pairs

Participants practice the strategy in pairs using the children's book.

5. Group Discussion

Participants discuss their use of the strategies as well as other reactions to and interpretations of the book. Engagement with the reading selection and the sharing of ideas is encouraged rather than one "right" or "best" answer.

6. Preparation for Reading to Children and Book Borrowing

After reviewing the strategy and tips for home reading, participants select books to read to their children. Participants are given a Reading Record form on which to document their home reading experience. In some cases, parents will also read to their children in the school setting.

The Adult Reading Option

Adult reading selections which parallel the children's book are an optional component. The adult selections may be (a) read aloud during the workshop (b) distributed for reading at home or (c) the subject of an additional workshop session.

FAMILY READING WORKSHOPS
Genres Strategies Titles

1. **The Power of Imagination:** Asking Questions
   Children's Title: *In the Attic* by Hiawyn Oram and Satoshi Kitamura
   Adult Title: from *Black Boy* by Richard Wright

2. **Wordless Picture Books**: Using Pictures to Evoke Oral Language and to Create a Story
   Children's Title: *Amanda and the Mysterious Carpet* by Fernando Krahn
   Adult Title: "Winning the Lottery"

3. **Concept Books:** Observing and Developing Vocabulary
   Children's Title: *Shapes, Shapes, Shapes* by Tana Hoban
   Adult Material: Photographs

4. **Telling Family Stories**: Relating Reading to Personal Experience
   Children's Title: *Tell Me A Story Mama* by Angela Johnson
   Adult Title: *The Birth of My First Child* by Maya Angelou

5. **Reading Family Stories**: Asking Questions and Making Predictions
   Children's Title: *A Chair for My Mother* by Vera B. Williams
   Adult Title: "Discovery of a Father" by Sherwood Anderson

6. **Folktales**: Making Predictions Using Two Sources of Information
   Children's Title: *The Little Red Hen* retold by Lucinda McQueen
   Adult Title: "Strawberries" retold by Gayle Ross in *Homespun: Tales of America's Favorite Storytellers*

7. **Fables**: Making Predictions
   Children's Title: *The Story of Jumping Mouse: A Native American Legend* by John Steptoe
   Adult Title: "The Mouse at the Seashore," by Arnold Lobel

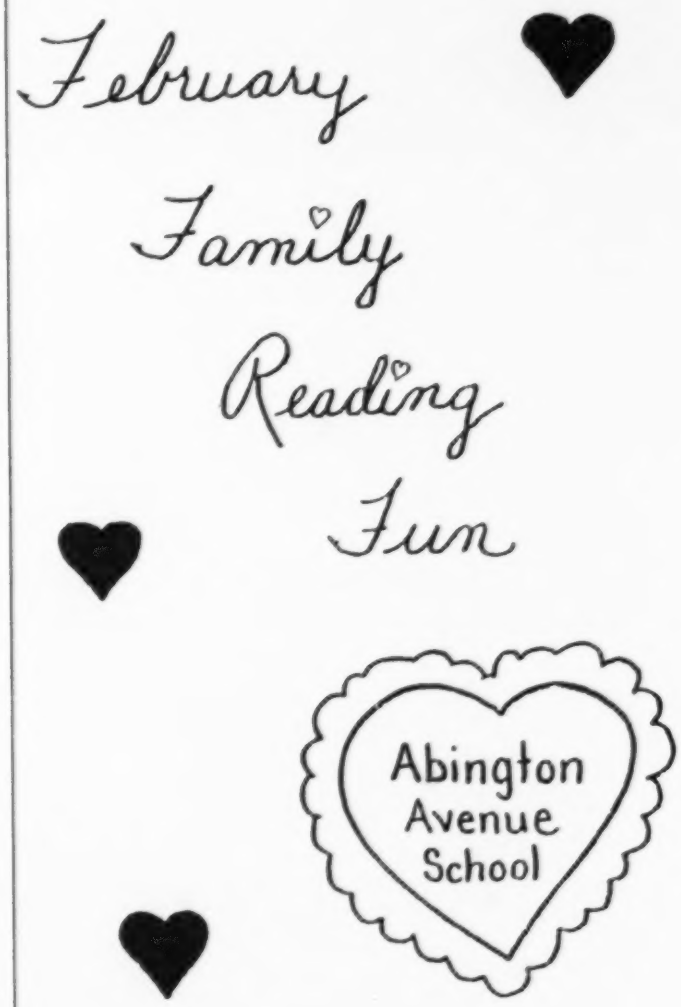
8. **Poetry:** Rereading
   Children's Title: *Surprises*, poems selected by Lee Bennett Hopkins
   Adult Titles: Selected poems

9. **Science**: Learning New Information
   Children's Title: *Fire* by Maria Ruis and J.M. Parramon
   Adult Title: *Fire*, special section for adults

10. **People and Society**: Learning New Information
    Children's Title: *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Ina R. Friedman
    Adult Title: "A Traditional Japanese Meal" by Lensey Namioka

from *Family Reading: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy*
Ellen Goldsmith and Ruth D. Handel
© 1990 New Readers Press

Sample invitation



ABINGTON AVENUE SCHOOL
Walter Afflitto, Principal

Dear Parents,

You are invited to our February Family Reading Parent Workshop.

Come prepared for an enjoyable hour of activity as we review favorite stories and make puppets for you to use at home with your child/ren.

Plan to attend on Tuesday, February 28th at 9:00 am in the school library.

Esta usted invitado a nuestra reunion de febrero de lectura familiar de padres.

Venga preparado para disfrutar una hora de actividades tales como repaso de historias favoritas y hacer titeres para usarlos en casa con sus hijos.

Planee atender el martes 28 de febrero a las 9:00 am en la biblioteca de la escuela.

Todos os pais estao convidados para participarem na Reuniao de Leitura Familiar do mes de Fevereiro.

Venham dispostos a participarem uma hora de leitura de historias infantis. Faremos tambem, fantoches para levarem para casa para as suas crianças.

A reunias tera lugar na biblioteca da escola no dia 28 de Fevereiro as 9:00 am.

Mrs. Ciccone
Mrs. Furman

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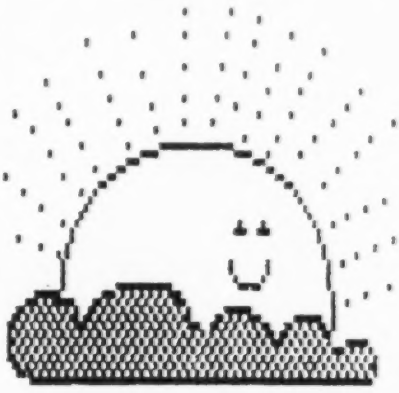
Sample invitation

TO: FAMILY READING

WHEN: WEDNESDAY
MARCH 28, 1990

PLACE: DR. MLK
SCHOOL LIBRARY
TIME: 8:40 A.M.
FOLLOWED BY
CLASSROOM VISITS
FOR "READING FUN"
BREAKFAST TO FOLLOW
IN BASIC SKILLS
MISS, S. CARIDA

YOU'RE INVITED



PLEASE COME!

LJR FOR SC FAMILY READING

Certificate of Participation

WE HEREBY COMMEND

for participation in

Family Reading

and award this certificate.

Awarded at DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. SCHOOL 108 SOUTH 9TH STREET NEWARK, N.J. 07107 this 24th day of May 1989

Ernest Thompson
Principal

Sandra Carida
Teacher

Sample certificate

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THE PARTNERSHIP FOR FAMILY READING

PROGRAM DISSEMINATION

1. The work of the Partnership for Family Reading has been presented at the following professional meetings:

International Reading Association Eastern Regional Meeting, Atlantic City, March 1991. "Intergenerational Reading and Children's Literature," Ruth D. Handel and Sandra Carida.

Indianapolis Public School Third National Conference on Mapping Action Plans for Partnerships, Indianapolis, December 1990. "Family Reading: A Home-School Partnership, " Ruth D. Handel.

International Reading Association Thirteenth World Congress on Reading, Stockholm, Sweden, July 1990."Program Descriptions and Research Findings," Ruth D. Handel.

American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, Boston, April 1990. "Shared Visions, Double Vision, and Changing Perspectives: A College/School Parent Participation Program, " Ruth D. Handel. (published as ERIC document ED 319 833).

New Jersey Reading Association Spring Conference, Hasbrouck Heights, NJ, April 1989."The Family Reading Partnership," Ruth D. Handel, Lenore Furman, Yvonne Troublefield and Evelyn Wright.

American Educational Research Association Invitational Seminar on Urban Schools, Family and Community, San Francisco, March 1989. "Report on the Partnership for Family Reading," Ruth D. Handel.

Montclair State College Conference on Families and School Achievement, May 1988. "Family Reading," Lenore Furman and Yvonne Troublefield.

2. Staff development workshops disseminated Family Reading to twelve additional Newark schools in 1990-91.

3. The Family Reading model has been adopted by schools in Brooklyn NY, Indianapolis IN, and San Diego County, CA.

FAMILY READING

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND CONSULTATION SERVICES

For additional information, contact:

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